

[E. R. Blocker]

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EARLY SETTLEMENT

Mrs. Ada Davis, P.W.

McLennan County, Texas

District No. 8

No. words 400

File No. 230

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E. R. Blocker, Waco, Texas. Interview.

John McLennan told E. R. Blocker's father that he and two Indians left their village, where Waco now stands, to go to Austin to steal horses. John McLennan had been stolen from his home when he was about nine years old, and for many years lived with the Indians. It was while living with the Red Men that he took this trip.

They slipped into Austin after night. They saw a light in a window and one of the Indians saw a women combing her hair. The Indian had never before seen any window glass. When the woman turned her back to the window he rabbed for the comb, breaking out the glass. The woman yelled in fright. The Indians ran, but did not forget to take a horse which had been tied near the house. They hurried back to Waco. The Indians took turns riding, the other two held to the horse's tail. A few miles south of Waco, a noise frightened them. As the Indians say: "This was the next night from Austin." One Indian drew his bow to

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shoot, but stumbled and fell on the arrow, killing himself. Mr. Blocker's father often talked to John McLennan after his return from captivity.

In 1868, Mr. Blocker and his father came to Waco from their home, twelve miles south of town. They saw a large herd of cattle on Bell's hill. They talked to the men who were herding these cattle. The men had a race horse with them. Blocker had a faster horse and they traded horses, getting a fifty dollar gold piece "to boot". It was octagon in shape. That herd of cattle was on the trail to Dodge City, Kansas. Mr. Blocker in his boyhood often saw herds of cattle swim the Brazos at Waco, with cowboys on horses on each side, when the water was very deep, to guide the cattle across. Many herds came by Waco in the early [days?] on their way to the northern markets. 2 In 1895, Mr. Blocker had an old man working for him, building a rock chimney. This man was named Jones, and he claimed that he was born near Marlin, Falls County, Texas and that he was the boy who made his escape with the little girl when the Indians murdered his parents and kinspeople, the Morgans, seven miles north of Marlin at Rock Dam [/,?] crossing on the Brazos/

Mr. Blocker said that when McLennan County was first settled by white people that all farms were in river bottoms because there as timber available for fencing. Barb wire had not been invented. Plows were crude things made by blacksmiths and could be used only on land without turf, such as river or timbered land. Chairs, buckets and tubs in his home were made of cedar, since they had settled where that tree was abundant. The first factory-made plows were sold in Waco nearly seventy years ago. (1936). The first wheel-plows were sold about sixty years ago. That was after the prairie lands began to be plowed into farm land. On of the Blocker slaves, who belonged to Mr. Blocker's aunt, Mrs. Colonel E. J. Gurley, bought two acres of land. He paid for this land with two ponies which at that time were valued at fifty dollars. Later, the Katy Rail Road, in 1881, bought this land and paid W. D. Cain, a prominent Waco negro and son-in-law of the slave, William Blocker, \$6,000 for the two acres of land. The new Waco Post Office is located on part of this land.

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Mr. Blocker recalls that at one time Dr. Rufus [Burleson?] wanted to baptize some converts; the Brazos was so frozen over that the ice had to be cut before the baptizing. Mr. Blocker entered school in 1865 at the age of six. The log school house was at Golindo, thirteen miles south of Waco. The teacher was a cousin of Mr. Blocker's mother. Neighbors to the Blockers at this time were the Jacksons, Hatches, Dutys, Majors, Norwoods, Smiths, and others prominent in the early history of Central 3 Texas. Deer, turkey, bear, wolves and other game were plentiful. In the fall, wild geese came in great numbers. Prairie chickens were plentiful.